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FIFTH REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE SITUATION IN SIERRA LEONE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. By paragraph 5 of its resolution 1162 (1998) of 17 April 1998, the Security Council authorized the deployment, with immediate effect, of up to 10 United Nations military liaison and security advisory personnel in accordance with paragraph 44 of my report of 18 March 1998 (S/1998/249) to Sierra Leone for a period of up to 90 days, to work under the authority of my Special Envoy, to coordinate closely with the Government of Sierra Leone and with ECOMOG, the Monitoring Group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to report on the military situation in the country, to ascertain the state of and to assist in the finalization of planning by the Government of Sierra Leone and ECOMOG for future tasks, such as the identification of the former combatant elements to be disarmed and the design of a disarmament plan, as well as to perform other related security tasks as identified in other paragraphs of my above-mentioned report.

2. By paragraph 10 of that resolution, the Council requested me to report periodically, including on the activities of those military liaison and security advisory personnel and on the work of the office of my Special Envoy in Sierra Leone, within the reporting time-frame set out in paragraph 16 of resolution 1132 (1998) of 8 October 1997. The present report is submitted in accordance with that time-frame, by which the Security Council requested the submission of a report every 60 days.

II. DEVELOPMENTS SINCE MY LAST REPORT

Action taken by the Government of Sierra Leone

3. Following its restoration on 10 March 1998, the Government of Sierra Leone has acted to consolidate its authority throughout the country as far as possible. On 16 March, President Kabbah, acting with the support of Parliament, proclaimed a state of emergency empowering him to take measures to ensure security and stability. These measures included the right to detain suspects and restrict their movements, the imposition of a curfew and the right to

requisition property. The Government also announced the expulsion of 22 persons and the deprivation of 10 others of Sierra Leonean citizenship for collaborating with the junta and for economic crimes and immigration irregularities.

4. On 20 March 1998, President Kabbah announced that his new streamlined Cabinet would comprise persons of known competence and integrity. The members of the Cabinet, which consists of 15 Ministers, 11 Deputy Ministers and 5 Ministers of State, have all been confirmed by Parliament, as have the President's nominees for the post of Chief Justice and many positions in parastatal bodies. The President has also appointed a Policy Advisory Committee to guide the Government on crucial issues of national interest and to monitor the functioning of the public institutions.

5. The Government has also taken steps to establish a National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, responsible for stimulating and coordinating related donor, Government and non-governmental activities. In accordance with its terms of reference, the National Commission would, in close collaboration with domestic and international funding agencies, draw up a two-year national rehabilitation, resettlement and reconstruction plan involving, inter alia, the repatriation and resettlement of internally displaced persons and refugees.

6. On 27 March 1998, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe, Mr. Stan Mudenge, led a five-person Commonwealth delegation on a visit to Freetown in order to explore ways in which the Commonwealth could assist Sierra Leone in the task of national reconstruction and peace-building. At the conclusion of the visit, the participants announced that they would urge all member Governments of the Commonwealth to assist Sierra Leone bilaterally in every practicable way in its efforts to achieve national reconstruction and reconciliation, and to contribute to the Trust Fund to support peacekeeping and related activities in Sierra Leone.

7. On 21 April 1998, a three-man team of British police experts visited Sierra Leone to advise the Government on the restructuring of the police force and the improvement of its equipment. The team also discussed the recruitment and role of police advisers and relations between the police and armed forces, among other matters. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has also provided the Government with communications equipment for the police.

8. From 4 to 8 May 1998, the Government received a multi-donor joint mission by the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Kingdom Department for International Development and the European Union (EU) to discuss a range of development-related matters. The joint mission also discussed the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, as described in more detail in section V below.

9. As described in section III below, on 6 May 1998, the Government instituted, in Freetown, the trials of a number of persons accused of plotting, participating in or collaborating with the coup d'état and the illegal junta.

10. On 22 May 1998, President Kabbah, in a comprehensive policy statement delivered at the State opening of the second session of Parliament, outlined major national policies his Government intends to pursue. These include: establishing guidelines for development activities, a framework for the creation of a new army and the restructuring and retraining of the police force; improving relations with neighbouring countries; reviving the national economy; strengthening key sectors of activity; and promoting civic education to sensitize Sierra Leoneans to the true meaning of peace and democracy. The President has also called for national reconciliation.

11. From 30 to 31 May 1998, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. Charles Margai, and the Deputy Defence Minister, Chief Hinga Norman, visited Makeni and Kenema and called on all remnants of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council/Revolutionary United Front (AFRC/RUF) forces to surrender within two weeks, promising them that they would be protected and treated fairly in accordance with the law.

12. On 4 June 1998, at a summit meeting of the leaders of the three Mano River Union countries, President Conteh and President Kabbah of Sierra Leone met at Conakry to discuss mutual cooperation in the subregion and relations between Liberia and Sierra Leone. Liberia was represented by the Vice-President, Mr. Enoch Dogolea.

Action taken by the Monitoring Group of the Economic Community of West African States

13. Following the expulsion of the illegal military junta from the capital, Freetown, in mid-February and the restoration of the democratically elected Government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah in the capital, ECOMOG moved swiftly to secure the area around Freetown, as well as the northern and southern provinces of the country, especially the towns of Makeni, Kambia and Kabala in the north and Bo and Kenema in the south. ECOMOG forces also advanced eastwards towards the Kono and Kailahun districts, where the forces of the former junta were concentrated.

14. Though ECOMOG has continued to make progress, it is severely overextended and its advance has been beset by logistical constraints, as well as by fierce resistance from elements of the AFRC and the RUF, the partners in the former junta. In mid-May, however, ECOMOG seized Koindu and Buedu on the eastern border of Sierra Leone with Guinea.

15. As ECOMOG troops approached, armed former junta elements attacked the local civilian population, killing, raping and mutilating hundreds of them, causing tens of thousands of Sierra Leoneans to flee into Liberia and Guinea in the last few weeks and tens of thousands more to flee into the interior of Sierra Leone. Hundreds of patients have been admitted to hospitals suffering from amputation of limbs and ears and severe lacerations. Humanitarian organizations fear that the actual number of victims may be much larger (see sect. III below).

16. ECOMOG is being supported by units of the Sierra Leonean Civil Defence Force (CDF), which is composed of irregular community-based fighters who fought the junta before the restoration of the legitimate Government. The Civil

Defence Force includes Kamajors, who are regionally based rural militia mainly from the south and parts of the east, as well as Tamaboros from the Koinadugu district, Donsos from the Kono district and Kapras, who are mainly from the Tonkolili district in the north. Though many CDF members are hunters who use traditional weapons, others are primarily farmers or students who joined the armed struggle against the junta. They are armed with a wide variety of weapons and often lack formal training and discipline. Though technically under ECOMOG control, their command and control structures are loose and informal.

17. On 4 and 5 May 1998 at Accra, my Special Envoy attended the seventeenth meeting of ECOWAS Chiefs of Staff convened to discuss the situation in Sierra Leone. At the meeting, the Nigerian Chief of Defence Staff, Major-General A. A. Abubakar, outlined ECOMOG's objectives in Sierra Leone as follows: the attainment of peace, the training of a new Sierra Leonean army, and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of Sierra Leonean combatants into society, accompanied by humanitarian assistance. The achievement of these objectives would be followed by the withdrawal of ECOMOG.

18. ECOMOG has deployed three brigades and an independent battalion, altogether comprising approximately 12,000 men, in Sierra Leone and has appealed for a further 6,000 to enable it to carry out its functions more effectively. A number of participants expressed willingness, in principle, to contribute forces to ECOMOG's operations in Sierra Leone. However, the countries concerned stressed that they were not in a position to do so without substantial financial and logistical assistance.

Action taken by the United Nations

19. Beginning on 4 May 1998, pursuant to resolution 1162 (1998), eight military liaison personnel were deployed in Freetown under the authority of my Special Envoy. The military officers, who are led by a Brigadier-General from India, are from Kenya (two), the Russian Federation (two), the United Kingdom (one) and Zambia (two). Two police advisers, one from Namibia and one from Kenya, as well as an adviser on planning for disarmament and demobilization, are expected to be deployed shortly. Some vehicles and communications equipment have also been deployed to Sierra Leone for the use of the officers.

20. The liaison officers have begun to travel through parts of the country to assess the situation with a view to finalizing plans for their deployment and for the disarmament of former combatants. The ECOMOG Force Commander, Brigadier-General Maxwell Khobe, has welcomed their arrival and promised his full cooperation.

21. The office of my Special Envoy has also been strengthened by the addition of a political affairs officer and a human rights adviser. In addition, I have taken steps to strengthen the human rights element of the office of my Special Envoy and have approached a number of Governments on an urgent basis to request them to make available suitably qualified trial monitors.

22. From 26 to 29 May 1998, my Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara A. Otunnu, visited Sierra Leone to assess the plight of children affected by the conflict. During his visit, Mr. Otunnu met with

President Kabbah, Ministers and Parliamentarians, as well as with the Force Commander of ECOMOG, the National Coordinator of CDF and representatives of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. He visited Daru, Segbwema and Kenema, accompanied by the Minister for Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, Mrs. Shirley Gbujama, my Special Envoy, the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the representative of UNICEF.

23. In discussions with the Government, ECOMOG and CDF, important commitments were made to my Special Representative in relation to the rights, protection and welfare of children. It was agreed that a joint task force for the demobilization of child combatants, comprising the Government, ECOMOG, CDF, the United Nations and international humanitarian agencies, would be constituted. The Government agreed not to recruit children under 18 years of age into a new national army. The Civil Defence Force committed to stop recruiting and initiating children under 18 and to begin the process of demobilization of child combatants within their ranks. Along with ECOMOG, CDF also undertook that children captured in or fleeing from areas held by junta elements would receive special protection. President Kabbah directed that a coordination group consisting of relevant Ministries, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, be established to coordinate an effective national response to the needs of children affected by armed conflict. Following their discussion with Mr. Otunnu, an all-party group of Parliamentarians constituted a caucus to serve as parliamentary advocates for the rights, protection and welfare of children affected by armed conflict in Sierra Leone.

24. At the conclusion of his visit, Mr. Otunnu proposed that the international community make Sierra Leone one of the pilot projects for a more concerted and effective response in the context of post-conflict peace-building.

Military and security situation in Sierra Leone

25. The security situation in Freetown continues to be favourable, with a strong but discreet ECOMOG presence and widespread deployment of the Sierra Leonean police. Schools, banks and markets are functioning normally, some international air links to the airport at Lungi have been restored and food and fuel products are widely available. Nevertheless, ECOMOG has continued to recover weapons in house-to-house searches conducted on the basis of information received about the presence in Freetown of former junta members and common criminals.

26. Despite ECOMOG's initial success in driving the elements of the junta rebels back towards the east of the country, several groups of rebels appear to have broken out of the Kailahun district and have moved northwards and westwards in an apparent attempt to re-establish some of their former bush camps in the north. They have been attacking towns and villages, terrorizing local communities and extorting food from them. The situation in the north is now considered unsatisfactory and food convoys have to be guarded by armed escort.

27. Moreover, in the course of their retreat towards the eastern part of the country, former junta elements inflicted extensive damage and engaged in indiscriminate looting and property destruction. In particular, hospitals in most communities lack beds, drugs and equipment.

28. The United States has contributed $3.9 million to ECOMOG over a four-month period through the logistics services company Pacific Architects and Engineers, which provided services to ECOMOG in Liberia. Some vehicles have already been made available. It is anticipated that this assistance will result in further gains by ECOMOG against the former junta forces. However, this contribution is not expected to assist in the deployment of additional ECOMOG forces, for which further contributions, whether bilaterally or through the Trust Fund to support peacekeeping and related activities in Sierra Leone, will be needed.

29. There are reports that many of the fighters supporting the former junta in the east are in fact Liberian nationals. The Monitoring Group of the Economic Community of West African States believes it has identified some of the dead combatants as Liberians after clashes with junta elements and has reportedly captured more than 100 Liberian fighters in the vicinity of Kailahun and in Kono district.

30. On 5 May 1998, President Taylor wrote to me deprecating the "disturbing allegation" that the Government of Liberia was involved in the conflict in Sierra Leone and stressing his commitment to the maintenance of peace in the region. President Taylor informed me that he had proposed to the Chairman of ECOWAS that ECOMOG "cordon off" the border between the two countries, and said he would welcome the concurrence of the United Nations with his suggestion that United Nations monitors be deployed in the border area.

31. On 7 May 1998, the Liberian Government issued a policy statement reaffirming that it would not permit its territory to be used to destabilize any neighbouring country and stating that President Taylor had approved the deployment of an ECOMOG observer unit at the border between Liberia and Sierra Leone in Lofa County, Liberia.

32. The Government of Sierra Leone has welcomed the issuance of the policy statement and has disclosed that a Liberian delegation visiting Freetown to attend the funeral of the late spouse of the President, Mrs. Patricia Kabbah, had met with President Kabbah and discussed the improvement of relations between the two countries.

33. In some parts of the country, misconduct by some members of CDF, arising from their indiscipline and lack of training, has given rise to complaints from civilians.

III. HUMAN RIGHTS

34. Since early May 1998, a human rights adviser has been attached to the office of my Special Envoy. His main tasks have included the observation of the treason trials and, in close consultation with the Special Envoy and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, examining modalities to increase the capacity of the office to monitor the human rights situation in Sierra Leone and to assist the Government in meeting its international human rights obligations in a sustainable manner. In carrying out its human rights functions, the office will work closely with all relevant elements of civil society, including national and international non-governmental organizations. Both the

Attorney-General and the Chief Justice of Sierra Leone have offered their full cooperation to my Special Envoy and his staff in the exercise of his human rights functions.

35. The main focus of human rights concerns since my last report has been the attacks on civilians by armed, uniformed groups, which are consistently reported to be members of the rebel forces. They have systematically mutilated or severed the limbs of non-combatants around the towns of Koidu and Kabala, in a zone that stretches as far west as Masiaka, south of Port Loko. The scale of the attacks can be estimated from the accounts of victims who have been admitted to hospital. For instance, in the period from 6 April to 21 May 1998, 225 people were admitted to Connaught Hospital in Freetown with war wounds. All but one were reported to be civilians. Of these, a quarter were amputees and half were victims of deep lacerations. The patients report that for every one person who reached the hospital, some five other victims of attacks are either dead or missing. In the same period, there have been some 500 admissions of war-wounded persons to other hospitals in Sierra Leone.

36. Of those victims who have received treatment, most are male, ranging in age from 8 to 60 years. The youngest amputee admitted to hospital is, however, a six-year-old girl, one of whose arms was completely severed. Victims also report that babies have been taken from their mothers' arms and burned alive. There are numerous reports of rape, including one of the multiple rape of a 12-year-old girl. Doctors at one hospital state that lacerations inflicted on one 60-year-old woman are the result of a failed attempt to behead her.

37. The office of my Special Envoy continues to receive information about human rights abuses perpetrated by forces loyal to the junta in the period before the restoration of the Government. From all parts of the country there are reports of extrajudicial killings, rape, arbitrary detention, including for purposes of sexual abuse, torture of children (especially of child-combatants), forced labour and the looting and destruction of residential and commercial premises and property. It will remain important to document these actions with a view to tackling issues of impunity and as an element in the process of promoting reconciliation and healing of society.

38. Information has also been received regarding widespread acts of extrajudicial revenge killings perpetrated against alleged junta collaborators following the restoration of the Government. In just one town, Kenema, there are reports of some 50 revenge killings. Some of those killed were children, with at least one case occurring in Freetown. There are reportedly still many people in hiding for fear of being subjected to revenge attacks. Reportedly some 100 of those hiding in the Freetown area are children. The Government has given assurances that revenge attacks will be investigated and prosecuted.

39. Reports indicate that elements of the Kamajors are responsible for violation of the human rights and rights under humanitarian law of both combatants and non-combatants. This militia force continues to include large numbers of male children. Concerns have been expressed to the Government on these matters and it has indicated that it is taking action to correct the situation (see paras. 22-24 above).

40. My Special Envoy continues to monitor the implementation of the state of emergency declared by the President on 10 March 1998, under which, inter alia, persons may be detained indefinitely without being charged or tried. There are more than 1,000 such detainees held at Pademba Road Prison in Freetown. The Government has established a screening committee to expedite the process of releasing detainees and bringing others to trial.

41. The Government is prosecuting 59 persons in the regular courts for charges, variously, of treason, murder and arson. Another trial of some 20 people is scheduled to start in the coming weeks, as are a number of courts martial. The civilian trials have, so far, proceeded in conformity with normal criminal procedure. Matters of concern are brought to the attention of the Government. The office of my Special Envoy will continue to observe the trials and will seek to augment its capacity in this regard.

42. On 27 May 1998, a delegation of Amnesty International, which had been studying the situation in Sierra Leone, met with my Special Envoy. The purpose of the Amnesty mission was to examine incidents that had occurred during the period of junta rule, as well as the extent of atrocities currently being committed by the remnants of the junta. Amnesty International is also reviewing the detention and trial in Freetown of persons accused of participating in or collaborating with the junta.

IV. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

43. The humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone is fluid. In the western area and the southern and eastern provinces (with the exception of Kailahun district), aid agencies have begun to reactivate programmes as they have benefited from improved security and access. In northern and north-eastern Sierra Leone, however, the situation has continued to deteriorate as a result of the activity of the former junta forces described above.

44. The humanitarian consequences of the wave of atrocities are very severe. Government hospitals in Makeni, Magburaka and Kabala and health clinics throughout the north have been overwhelmed by the influx of civilians suffering from amputations and maimings and are hampered by staff shortages and logistical constraints.

45. There has already been an outbreak of measles in two camps in the north and there is a severe risk of further outbreaks of epidemics such as cholera with the imminent onset of the rainy season. Furthermore, the non-governmental organization Action contre la Faim, which operates therapeutic feeding centres in Makeni and Magburaka, has reported a large influx of malnourished children under the age of five. Admissions have doubled during the past week. Malnutrition levels are increasing, and there are indications that the 10 per cent global acute malnutrition threshold, at which an emergency response is required, is being breached. If the security situation in the north continues to deteriorate, there is a serious risk that the harvest will be looted by armed elements, thus further undermining the food security of the rural population.

46. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reported that refugees from Sierra Leone are continuing to flow into Faranah, Kissidougou and Guéckédou prefectures in eastern Guinea at a rate of 300 people per day. Many new arrivals, particularly children, suffer from malnutrition. UNHCR has documented the recent cases of at least 82 victims of rebel atrocities, including 28 who were mutilated. The refugees come mainly from the districts of Kailahun, Kono and Kenema. The influx is taking place despite reported attempts by the remnants of the junta to prevent people from leaving those areas. At the same time, about 40,000 internally displaced persons have flooded into the towns of Masingbi, Makeni, Kabala and Magburaka. Over the past three months, some 237,000 Sierra Leoneans have poured into Guinea and Liberia, bringing the total number of Sierra Leonean refugees in the two neighbouring countries to 530,000 people since the start of the conflict in 1991.

47. On 2 June 1998, UNHCR issued an urgent appeal for $7.3 million to help refugees who have fled from the rebel forces. The amount is designed to cover relief assistance to new arrivals in Guinea and Liberia until the end of the year. This followed a visit to Freetown from 2 to 3 June 1998 by the Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Soren Jessen-Petersen.

48. The humanitarian response to the crisis in the north has been severely constrained by the difficulty of access owing to security risks. Road travel from Freetown to Makeni and Koidu is restricted, since agencies are reluctant to travel by road for fear of attacks. Furthermore, many aid agency staff were threatened by AFRC/RUF elements during the period of the ECOMOG intervention and no relief agency has deployed international staff permanently up-country since then.

49. Nevertheless, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the non-governmental organization Médecins sans Frontières have sent medicines, bedding and plastic sheeting to the north. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Médecins sans Frontières have offered to coordinate the joint distribution of medical supplies to hospitals in Makeni, Magburaka and Kabala. UNICEF has delivered supplies to Kenema and supported efforts by the local authorities to immunize more than 400 children against measles, and the World Food Programme (WFP) is providing assistance to health institutions.

50. From 5 to 6 May 1998, the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit also co-sponsored a workshop for community leaders in the Bo district concerning the code of conduct that governs the activities of relief workers. The workshop was planned in response to incidents of the commandeering of vehicles by Kamajors and ECOMOG in the area. Non-governmental organizations have since reported that the Kamajors have facilitated the safe passage of relief supplies and it is now intended to conduct similar workshops in other parts of the country, including Kenema.

51. An inter-agency mission led by the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator on 19 May 1998 to Daru and Segbwema found the situation in the south-east of the country, which had been inaccessible for some months for security reasons, more favourable than expected in some respects. However, large numbers of

unaccompanied children were identified who are in need of family-tracing services, feeding and health care.

52. Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, will visit Sierra Leone from 10 to 12 June 1998 in order to observe at first hand the ongoing humanitarian programmes and the current difficulties faced by the humanitarian community.

V. DISARMAMENT AND DEMOBILIZATION

53. Both the Abidjan Agreement of 30 November 1996 between the Government of Sierra Leone and RUF and the Conakry Agreement of 23 October 1997 between ECOWAS and AFRC contain provisions for the disarmament and demobilization of Sierra Leonean fighters and their reintegration into society. In his statement at the State opening of Parliament, President Kabbah called on all remnants of the AFRC/RUF to surrender, offering them assurances that they would be treated humanely in accordance with the Geneva Convention and its additional Protocols. The President also indicated that elements of the Conakry Agreement and the Abidjan Agreement would be taken into consideration in the implementation of the disarmament and demobilization programme. The prompt implementation of such a programme is regarded as essential to the stability of Sierra Leone and of the subregion in general.

54. Following the removal of the junta by force by ECOMOG in February and the subsequent ECOMOG action throughout the rest of the country, the Abidjan Agreement and the Conakry Agreement are considered to have been effectively superseded. However, in the parts of the country that have now been brought under Government control, some aspects of those instruments that govern the disarmament and demobilization of former Sierra Leonean fighters might still be applicable. These include the following categories: members of the former Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF), including members of AFRC, the country's former army, which has now effectively been dissolved; members of RUF; members of CDF; and child soldiers.

55. Both ECOMOG and the Government have developed plans for the disarmament and demobilization of former combatants and for their reintegration into society. Pursuant to the recommendations of the joint mission described in paragraph 8 above, the Government has adopted a comprehensive framework for the disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion and reintegration of ex-combatants and their families. The plan envisages the establishment of a Sierra Leone veterans assistance board to be chaired by President Kabbah, which would, in close cooperation with ECOMOG, the United Nations and donors, supervise the disarmament and demobilization of an estimated 32,000 former combatants in three phases, provisionally over the next 19 months. A small executive secretariat will be charged with the implementation of the policies of the Board in close coordination with ECOMOG and the United Nations.

56. The demobilization process will begin with a rigorous registration process to ensure that eligible ex-combatants receive identification documents. The first priority is the demobilization of some 5,000 to 7,000 former members of the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces already disarmed by ECOMOG and

assembled in camps around Freetown, i.e., at Wilberforce Barracks, Benguema Training Centre and Lungi. ECOMOG has recently reported that the numbers of men at each camp have fallen, apparently because some of the men have been provisionally released. Units of CDF in parts of the country deemed secure by the Government and local authorities will also be demobilized in phase I and will undergo a similar and registration exercise. Some CDF units have already returned to their communities of origin in preparation for the disarmament process, though many CDF fighters have also recently been moved up to the Daru area, apparently to join the offensive against the former junta forces at Kailahun. On 25 March 1998, President Kabbah formally requested the international community to provide food for the maintenance of the 7,000 ex-combatants for a two-month period.

57. Preliminary estimates indicate that there are some 1,000 disabled soldiers, 500 female ex-combatants and about 2,500 children. Under the plan, all adult ex-combatants will receive the same reinsertion assistance, the level and nature of which will be determined by the Sierra Leone Veterans Assistance Board, in consultation with donors. The reinsertion assistance will be provided in instalments in order to provide a transitional safety net to ex-combatant families, to encourage them to remain in their areas of resettlement and to monitor their reintegration progress. Furthermore, the Government intends to provide a community-based social and economic reintegration assistance to assist ex-combatants to return to sustainable and productive lives in their communities. Particularly vulnerable groups of ex-combatants, such as child soldiers and the disabled, will receive specialized assistance.

58. The Government intends to proceed with the disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion and reintegration process as far as possible, notwithstanding continuing fighting in some parts of the country. The rapid demobilization of the encamped RSLMF will reduce the security and cost burden borne by the Government and ECOMOG in maintaining the camps. Insofar as adequate reinsertion and reintegration assistance and effective monitoring systems are put in place as planned, the Government is confident that this process will contribute to national reconciliation and reconstruction.

59. Though the plan envisages specific phases, provisionally scheduled to culminate in January 2000, these depend in part on the willingness of those who are still resisting ECOMOG's advance and terrorizing civilians in the north to surrender. It is not clear at this time whether these men, who appear to include the most violent and ruthless supporters of the former junta, intend to surrender or, if so, under what circumstances this might take place.

60. Another important aspect of the plan that remains to be clarified concerns the source of the funding. The plan is not accompanied by a cost estimate, but an earlier Government assessment of the likely costs arrived at a figure of some $14 million. Since that estimate was arrived at in respect of a more modest operation, the likely cost of the current exercise is likely to exceed it. No commitment has yet been made by donors for the funding of the exercise. However, the Government believes it has made some progress in identifying sufficient funds to continue to feed the surrendered soldiers for the next two months or so.

61. On 5 June 1998, my Special Envoy convened a meeting of United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and donor representatives to discuss the coordination of international support and contributions to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the 7,000 ex-combatants.

62. On 12 June 1998, the World Bank, which participated in the multi-donor joint mission mentioned in paragraph 8 above, will send two consultants to Sierra Leone to discuss with all participants the further refinement of the plan, including practical arrangements to make it operationally effective. These arrangements are expected to include the provision of strong technical assistance to the executive secretariat of the Sierra Leone Veterans Assistance Board.

VI. PROPOSED ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY THE UNITED NATIONS

63. In the complex and volatile situation currently prevailing in Sierra Leone, the priority task is to promote stability and security by disarming and demobilizing as many former combatants as possible, as soon as possible. The plan adopted by the Government on the advice of the multi-donor joint mission provides a useful basis to accomplish this goal, though much remains to be done in terms of identifying sources of funding and determining the precise roles to be played by the international community. In general terms, I would envisage that, under the overall authority of the Government, my Special Envoy would ensure that the various donors continued to coordinate their activities closely. Within that framework the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), working through the United Nations Office for Project Services, and in close cooperation with donors and implementing partners, would carry out the arrangements put in place for disarmament and demobilization prior to the May 1997 coup.

64. In this context, I intend to convene a high-level conference in the near future in order to mobilize assistance for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, and for the reconstruction, rehabilitation of Sierra Leone. The conference would also address the need to provide logistical and other support to ECOMOG in order to improve its capacity to carry out its peacekeeping role, as well as for emergency and humanitarian needs.

65. Moreover, I believe the United Nations could render immediate assistance to Sierra Leone by deploying a limited number of unarmed military observers to assist in tasks of pressing importance. Such a deployment at this stage could lend much-needed impetus to a fragile but vital process, which deserves the support of the international community. It could also assist my Special Envoy to avert further bloodshed among civilians and combatants alike - both ECOMOG and Sierra Leonean - by helping to encourage the surrender of former junta elements in the event that this appeared to be possible. Finally, a more visible United Nations presence could serve to bolster the confidence of the Government and people of Sierra Leone in the commitment to their cause of the international community and encourage more substantial donor support for disarmament, demobilization and longer-term rehabilitation and development.

66. I have therefore developed a concept of operations for a United Nations peacekeeping observer mission, initially for a six-month period, whose immediate objectives would be the following:

(a) To monitor the military and security situation in the country as a whole with a view to assisting the Government and ECOMOG in the subsequent implementation of disarmament and demobilization phases as outlined in the Government's plan;

(b) To monitor the demobilization of former combatants already disarmed by ECOMOG and concentrated in secure areas of the country. This would involve collaboration with ECOMOG in its activities, including the provision of security and arms collection and destruction;

(c) To assist in monitoring respect for international humanitarian law at disarmament and demobilization sites;

(d) To monitor the voluntary disarmament and demobilization of members of CDF in their home regions and to monitor progress in the creation of a new national army;

(e) To observe, as security conditions permit, the situation in the north and east of the country, with a view to assisting in the disarmament and demobilization of surrendering former junta forces;

(f) To continue to provide my Special Envoy for Sierra Leone with regular information concerning the military and security situation in the country as a whole.

67. The mission would be known as the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) and would be led by my Special Envoy, Mr. Francis G. Okelo, who would be designated Special Representative for Sierra Leone. The Chief Military Observer would be Brigadier-General Subhash C. Joshi (India), who is currently the team leader of the small military liaison cell deployed to Sierra Leone pursuant to resolution 1162 (1998). UNOMSIL would subsume the office of my Special Envoy and its staff and the related cost estimates will be issued shortly as an addendum to the present report.

68. The activities described above would require up to 70 officers, as well as a medical unit of up to 15 persons, with the necessary equipment and civilian administrative support staff.

69. In view of the volatile security situation outside the capital, the deployment would take place in phases, with the first group of approximately 40 military observers being deployed, starting during the month of July 1998, to Freetown, Hastings and Lungi. The timing of subsequent deployments would then depend on the security situation, the progress of implementation of the Government's disarmament and demobilization plan and the availability of the necessary logistical equipment and resources. In this connection, I would call on the Government of Sierra Leone to be prepared to make available to the mission such premises and services as they can. At this stage, I would provisionally anticipate that the second phase of deployment would then take place in August-September, with the final phase beginning in October.

70. The observers would be deployed at each of the three camps where former Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces are now being detained, i.e.,

Wilberforce Barracks, Benguema Training Centre and Lungi; at the three ECOMOG Brigade headquarters at Hastings, Makeni and Bo; and at a headquarters location to support the Chief Military Observer. During the next phases, subject to the considerations identified above, observers could be deployed outside the immediate area of Freetown, including to the home regions of CDF members returning to undertake voluntary disarmament and demobilization as and when they considered their home communities sufficiently secure.

71. The mission would be provided with adequate air support in order to ensure mobility and security, as well as casualty and medical evacuations. A boat would also be required to facilitate travel and communications between Lungi and Freetown.

72. Should the Security Council agree to these measures, I will establish security arrangements for United Nations personnel with the Chairman of ECOWAS and conclude a status of mission agreement with the Government of Sierra Leone.

73. The deployment described above would require a commensurate expansion in the size of the office of the Special Representative, including information and political officers, as well as the necessary administrative and support staff.

74. I would also propose to increase to four the number of human rights officers attached to the office of my Special Envoy. These officers, under the direction of the Special Representative, and in close cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, would have a monitoring role and the task of addressing the country's long-term human rights institution building needs.

75. An increase in the number of civilian police advisers from two to five would also be required. These officers would advise the Government and local police officials on police practice, training and recruitment, in particular on the need to respect internationally accepted standards of policing in democratic societies. They would also monitor the progress of the restructuring of the Sierra Leonean police force.

76. At this point, it is difficult to assess whether an expansion of the mission might be needed six months from now and, if so, what form it might take. My recommendations on this matter will depend on ECOMOG's progress in restoring security throughout the country. If the presence of United Nations personnel in areas of continuing insecurity is considered desirable in order to reduce bloodshed by encouraging armed elements to surrender, or if areas of Sierra Leone now secure come under threat from hostile elements, thought must be given to ensuring the security of United Nations personnel. Although ECOMOG is a capable force and has indicated it would guarantee the security of the observers, it is also a potential target of attacks by the remnants of the junta. Unarmed military observers under its protection might not be regarded as neutral by hostile armed elements and their safety might therefore be jeopardized.

77. For those reasons, I could envisage the possibility, at a future stage, of recommending the deployment of a highly mobile unit of armed United Nations troops, operating in close cooperation with ECOMOG but independent of it, to

protect observers in locations where their security might be at risk, but where their neutral presence may be helpful in encouraging armed elements to surrender. However, I do not believe that the time is ripe to make such a recommendation to the Council at this stage.

78. The deployment of ECOMOG troops at the border with Liberia could help lay to rest allegations of the influx of arms or the provision of armed assistance to the junta by foreign forces. I commend the Government of Liberia for its policy statement reaffirming that it will not permit its territory to be used to destabilize any neighbouring country. Verification that this was the case would, in my view, improve the security climate throughout the entire subregion and improve mutual confidence among its member countries. I hope there will be further discussions between the Heads of State of the subregion on these matters.

79. I therefore intend to pursue with President Taylor his proposal for the deployment of a small contingent of United Nations military observers at the border with Sierra Leone, in order to assist in verifying that Liberian territory is not being used to destabilize Sierra Leone and that foreign forces are not assisting the remnants of the former junta there. I will also discuss the matter with President Kabbah and with the Chairman of ECOWAS and revert to the Council in due course.

VII. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

80. Since my last report, the situation in Sierra Leone has in some respects improved considerably. Since its restoration on 10 March 1998, the Government has moved rapidly to reassert its authority throughout much of the country. President Kabbah has nominated a compact Cabinet of acknowledged experts in their fields, all of whom have been confirmed by Parliament, as well as a Chief Justice.

81. However, in the eastern part of Sierra Leone and parts of the north, the remnants of the former junta continue to resist ECOMOG forces and attack Sierra Leonean civilians. I join with the Council in deploring the continued resistance to the legitimate Government, in calling on the supporters of the junta to lay down their arms, and in condemning the mutilations, rapes, looting and other atrocities carried out by junta elements against the civilian population. I also align myself with the commendation expressed for ECOWAS and ECOMOG in the presidential statement adopted on 20 May 1998 (S/PRST/1998/13) for the important role they are playing to restore peace and security in Sierra Leone, and support the call for Member States to provide technical and logistical support to assist ECOMOG to continue to enhance its ability to carry out its peacekeeping role and contribute to bringing an end to the atrocities being committed against the people of Sierra Leone. In this context, I welcome the logistical assistance provided by the United States. I am also grateful for the contribution made by the United Kingdom, and invite other Member States to make contributions to the Trust Fund to support peacekeeping and related activities in Sierra Leone.

82. It is clear that there are a significant number of victims of rebel atrocities who remain in the bush or who are otherwise unable to receive medical attention. I applaud the efforts of United Nations humanitarian personnel, ECOMOG and the non-governmental organizations in locating and aiding victims. However, more must be done as a matter of urgency, including the provision of additional medical and surgical capacity, including hospital beds. In the longer term, the agencies and the non-governmental organizations concerned will need to offer support in the form of prosthesis services for all amputees and psycho-social treatment of traumatized victims and their families. In this context, I welcome the intention of ICRC to dispatch a surgical team to Sierra Leone to augment local medical facilities.

83. I call on the Government of Sierra Leone to continue to show the necessary resolve to adhere to international human rights standards and its own distinguished legal traditions in ensuring that those accused of the gravest crimes against the State and its people receive fair trials. I am aware that the Government has held to this course so far in the face of strongly voiced public contempt for the accused.

84. I express my appreciation to those Member States and others who have contributed to the flash appeal for humanitarian assistance and for various humanitarian projects.

85. I recommend that the Security Council establish an observer mission in Sierra Leone, to be known as the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), with the mandate and concept of operations described in paragraphs 66 to 71 above and with the necessary augmentation of civilian and civilian police staff as set out in paragraphs 73 to 75 above.

86. During the six-month period of the mandate, I would keep the situation closely under review and would make further recommendations to the Council concerning a possible extension or expansion of the mission as the circumstances permitted.

87. I support the recommendation of my Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict that Sierra Leone be made one of the pilot projects for a more concerted and effective response in the context of post-conflict peace-building.

88. Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to my Special Envoy and to all United Nations staff in Sierra Leone for their efforts over the past several weeks.

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